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GRAMMAR QUERIES

ON

GRAY'S ELEGY

WITH

Notes and Answers

BY

J. M. TAYLOR, M. S.

**Principal of the Public Schools
Newcastle, Wash.**

**PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
1916**

Corrigenda

Shakespeare says, "*Out damned spot! out, I say.*"

Lady Macbeth could not wash the spot from her hand; but, if the sales of this book warrant another edition, we shall endeavor to "out" some of these spots:

Page 4, line 19, insert an *e* in *rugged*.

Page 9, in query 53, *when* should be *where*.

Page 11, in query 113, close the space in *history*.

Page 17, after query 199 insert: 200 Parse to *stray*.

Change 200 to 201.

Page 19, change 257 to 251.

Page 26, insert at the top of the page—

23 *Way* is in the objective case. It is used adverbially to

Page 28, after 49 insert: 50 It does

Page 29, line 2, for French insert Trench and the same in line 6.

Page 31, in answer 101, *observe* should be *obscure*.

Page 32, in answer 116, change to *yon* to *with you*.

Page 41, line 3, insert *a. t.* at the beginning.

Page 45, in answer 290, *hyperbation* should be *hyperbaton*.

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PREFACE

The design of this little book is to furnish supplemental work for students of English. It can be used with any text book on English Grammar, in any school in which grammar is taught. Many difficult constructions of the English sentence are explained in its pages.

It is an analysis of the most exquisite poem in our language. It is believed that this work will be helpful to both teachers and students of English.

After many years of careful study the book is offered with some diffidence to the educational public.

J. M. TAYLOR.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE POEM.

Gray spent eight years from 1742 to 1750 in writing, improving and perfecting this the finest poem ever produced in English. It became so popular that it was translated into all the modern languages of Europe, as well as into Greek, Hebrew and Latin.

The cause of this wide-spread popularity of the poem lies in the fact that it expresses in an easy, natural way, the feelings and emotions that, time after time, have found a place in every breast.

Its naturalness and simplicity win the heart and enlist the tenderest of human sympathies. Speculations on the strange and wonderful problems of life and death will at times force themselves upon the mind.

Need it be wondered at, that an almost irresistible fascination takes possession of the reader when perusing what, to him, is largely a reflex of his own serious meditations?

By a few facile strokes of the pen, in his inimitable style, the poet draws the deepening shades of twilight in upon us and amid the hush of nature we see the churchyard and its "rugged elms." Our meditations carry us back to the "toils" and "homely joys" of the "rude forefathers." The imposing "tomb" the "storied urn," the "animated bust," deeply impress the mind. We look upon the graves and moralize on the possibilities and probabilities of the lives of those now interred beneath those "mouldering heaps."

At each successive reading of the beautiful poem, we linger with delight over those impressive and affecting lines and resolve to lead a better life.

What a grand, pathetic, and sympathizing soul was Gray!

Let him who would understand the force and grandeur of the English language give his days and nights to the study of the Elegy.

WHAT GREAT THINKERS HAVE SAID OF GRAY'S ELEGY.

Dr. Johnson, who never said a good word for Gray's productions, if he could help it, gave the following favorable criticism of the Elegy: "In the character of the Elégy I rejoice to concur with the common reader. 'The churchyard' abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him."

Byron thus expresses his high esteem of the Elegy: "Had Gray written nothing but his Elegy, high as he stands, I am not sure that he would not stand higher; it is the corner-stone of his glory."

Another writer says: "It is the familiar recitation of every schoolboy, the thoughtful pleasure of every man."

It is related that the night before the attack on Quebec, as the British troops were floating in darkness and in silence down the St. Lawrence, General Wolfe repeated the lines of the Elegy to his companions, and exclaimed: "Now, gentlemen, I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French tomorrow!"

After the events of the following day, how prophetic seems the line,

The paths of glory lead but to the grave!

Daniel Webster, just before his death, requested Gray's Elegy to be read to him, that he might again listen to its soothing words.

Dr. Thomas M. Gatch, one of the greatest teachers that ever lived on the Pacific Coast, a few months before his death, told the writer that he had spent some time lately committing Gray's Elegy to memory, or rather refreshing his memory with the pathos and grandeur of the poem.

Samuel S. Greene, the grammarian, says: "Study carefully this Elegy, analyze it with exactness, challenge every word in it to give up to you its separate contribution to the chain of the whole, and you will write and speak better English all your life after."

ELEGY

Written In a Country Churchyard.

I

- 1 The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
- 2 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
- 3 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
- 4 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

II

- 5 Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
 - 6 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 - 7 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 - 8 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:
-

QUERIES.

- 1 What is an elegy?
- 2 What is an epitaph?
- 3 What is a dirge?
- 4 What are the leading thoughts contained in Gray's Elegy?
- 5 What constitutes the peculiar charm of the poem?
- 6 Describe the metre.

- 7 What was the origin of the custom of burying the dead in churchyards?
- 8 What is the meaning of *curfew*?
- 9 What is the derivation of the word *curfew*?
- 10 Does the ringing of the curfew still prevail in England?
- 11 Is the verb *tolls* transitive or intransitive?
- 12 Is *knell* a cognate object or an appositive?
- 13 What is the meaning of *parting day*?
- 14 Why is the form *parting* used here?
- 15 Why is the verb *wind* plural in form?
- 16 What is a *lea*? Give the derivation of the word.
- 17 Arrange the words in the third line in as many ways as possible, preserving the rythm, the general sentiment and the rhyming word.
- 18 Is there a synonym of *plods* that might appropriately take its place?
- 19 Is *plods* transitive or intransitive?
- 20 What word does *weary* logically qualify? Grammatically?
- 21 What or who was weary?
- 22 What right has the poet to collate words thus?
- 23 In what case is *way*?.. How used?
- 24 What does the word *world* mean?
- 25 Does the plowman leave the world?
- 26 What is the subject of the verb *jades*?
- 27 What is the subject of the verb *holds*?
Did Gray mean *the air holds a stillness*, or a stillness holds the air?
- 28 What does the word *holds* mean?
- 29 What part of speech is the word *save*?
- 30 Give the history of the word *save*.
- 31 What is the object of *save*?
- 32 Is the verb *wheels* transitive or intransitive?
- 33 What is a beetle?
- 34 What figure of speech is expressed by *droning flight* and *drowsy tinklings*? What is it that *drones*? What or who is drowsy?
- 35 What figure of speech is *folds*?
- 36 What is the object of *save*?
- 37 How should *that* in line 9 be parsed?
- 38 What part of speech is *yonder*?

III

- 9 Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
 10 The moping owl does to the moon complain
 11 Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
 12 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

IV

- 13 Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 14 Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
 15 Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
 16 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

V

- 17 The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
 18 The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
 19 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 20 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

VI

- 21 For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 22 Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
 23 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 24 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

- 39 Define *ivy-mantled*.
 40 What is the derivation of the word *tower*?
 41 Why is the word *moping* used with *owl*?
 42 In what way does the owl complain to the moon?
 43 What part of speech is *such*? ..*As*? ..*Wandering*? *Near*?
 44 Why has the pronoun *her* the feminine form?
 45 What is the derivation of *bower*?
 46 In what case is *bower* and how used?
 47 Why is the word *ancient* used here?
 48 In some editions of the Elegy there is a comma after
 ancient. Why should not the comma be used here?

- 49 What relation does the preposition *beneath* show?
- 50 Does it govern *shade* as well as *elms*?
- 51 Does *shade* mean shadow?
- 52 What does *rugged* mean?
- 53 What does the clause introduced by *when* modify?
- 54 Is *heaves* transitive or intransitive?
- 55 What is the subject of *heaves*?
- 56 What is the history of the phrase *many a*?
- 57 Should *many* and *a* be parsed together? Why?
- 58 What part of speech is *each* and how used?
- 59 What does the expression *narrow cell* mean?
- 60 What is the meaning of the word *rude*?
- 61 Analyze the word *hamlet*. What does *ham* mean? What does *let* mean?
- 62 What is the meaning of the epithet *incense-breathing*?
- 63 Parse *twittering*. To what does *straw-built* refer?
- 64 What is a *clarion*?
- 65 By what figure of speech is *clarion* used?
- 66 To what custom does the expression *echoing horn* allude?
- 67 Should the words *no* and *more* be parsed together? Why?
- 68 What is the subject of *shall rouse*?
- 69 Why *shall* and not *will*?
- 70 What is the antecedent of *them*?
- 71 Why *lowly* and not *low*?
- 72 Does *lowly bed* mean the *grave*?
- 73 What accumulation is found in these lines?
- 74 What constitutes the figure of euphemism?
- 75 What is the subject of *shall burn*?
- 76 Does the *hearth* burn?
- 77 What change in the meaning would arise by substituting *will* for *shall*?
- 78 Is *care* the object of *ply*?
- 79 What does *ply* mean?
- 80 What does *care* mean?
- 81 How should *to lisp* be parsed? *Return*?
- 82 Is *knees* object of *climb*?
- 83 What is the object of *to share*?
- 84 What does *to share* modify?

VII

- 25 Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
26 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
27 How jocund did they drive their team afield!
28 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

VIII

- 29 Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
30 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
31 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
32 The short and simple annals of the poor.

IX

- 33 The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
34 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
35 Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
36 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

X

- 37 Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
38 If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise;
39 Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
40 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

-
- 85 What is the derivation and meaning of *sickle*?
86 What is the antecedent of *their*?
87 What is the subject of *has broke*?
88 Why did Gray use the form *has broke* here?

- 89 Is *has broke* grammatical?
- 90 What is the meaning of *stubborn*?
- 91 By what figure of speech is *furrow* used?
- 92 What is the meaning of *glebe*?
- 93 By what right does the poet use *jocund* for *jocundly*?
- 94 What does *jocund* modify?
- 95 How should *afield* be parsed?
- 96 What is the force of the prefix *a* in *afield*?
- 97 What is the subject of *bow'd*?
- 98 What does *sturdy* mean?
- 99 By what figure of speech is *Ambition* used?
- 100 How should *mock* be parsed?
- 101 Parse *joys, destiny* and *obscure*.
- 102 What is the meaning of *homely*?
- 103 By what figure is *grandeur* used?
- 104 What is the meaning of *annals*?
- 105 In what number is *poor*?
- 106 What is *heraldry*?
- 107 What part of speech is *all*?
- 108 What is the subject of *awaits*?
- 109 Some editions of the Elegy have *await*.
- 110 Why should it be *awaits*?
- 111 What part of speech is *alike*? How used?
- 112 What is the meaning of *inevitable hour*?
- 113 *The paths of glory lead but to the grave.* Give two instances in his tory that show the truth of this statement.
- 114 What part of speech is *but* and how used?
- 115 Are the two forms *you* and *ye* alike in meaning?
- 116 Parse *ye* and *proud*.
- 117 What part of speech is *these*?
- 118 Whom do *these* represent?
- 119 By what figures is *memory* used?
- 120 What does the clause introduced by *where* modify?
- 121 What is the meaning of *long-drawn*?
- 122 What is the derivation of *aisle*?
- 123 What is a *fretted vault*?
- 124 What is an anthem?
- 125 Parse *pealing*.

XI

- 41 Can storied urn or animated bust
42 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
43 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust ?
44 Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

XII

- 45 Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
46 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
47 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
48 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre:

XIII

- 49 But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
50 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
51 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
52 And froze the genial current of the soul.

XIV

- 53 Full many a gem of purest ray serene
54 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
55 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
56 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

- 126 What is the meaning of *storied urn*?
- 127 What does *animated* mean here?
- 128 For what is *mansion* used?
- 129 What does *Honour's voice* mean?
- 130 Why is the word *provoke* used here?
- 131 What is the derivation of *provoke*?
- 132 What rhetorical figures in these lines?
- 133 In what sense is the epithet *neglected* used?
- 134 Parse *pregnant*.
- 135 What is the subject of *is laid*?
- 136 What is the meaning of *celestial fire*?
- 137 Parse *hands*.
- 138 What is meant by *rod of empire*?
- 139 What is meant by *living lyre*?
- 140 What does *her* represent?
- 141 Why is *her* feminine?
- 142 In what case is *page*?
- 143 Why *ample page*?
- 144 What does *rich* modify?
- 145 What is meant by *spoils of time*?
- 146 Why is *chill* used with penury?
- 147 Why *unroll*? Why not open the page? Do we unroll pages?
- 148 What is meant by *noble rage*?
- 149 What is the derivation of *genial*?
- 150 What does *current* mean?
- 151 What does *full* modify?
- 152 Can *many* and *a* be parsed separately? Why?
- 153 What is a *gem*?
- 154 What does *purest ray serene* mean?
- 155 What does *serene* modify?
- 156 What does *serene* mean?
- 157 What is an *unfathomed cave*? What is a fathom? For what used?
- 158 What is the meaning of *bear*?
- 159 Parse *to blush*.
- 160 Is *unseen* a participle or an adjective? Why?
- 161 Why is *blush* used and not *blossom*?
- 162 Parse *waste*.
- 163 Why is the epithet *desert* used?

XV

- 57 Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
58 The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
59 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
60 Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

XVI

- 61 Th' applause of listening senates to command,
62 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
63 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
64 And read their history in a nation's eyes,

XVII

- 65 Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
66 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
67 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
68 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

XVIII

- 69 The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
70 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
71 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
72 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

- 164 *Some village Hampden.* What figure is this?
- 165 Why *village*?
- 166 Who was *Hampden*?
- 167 What is meant by *little tyrant of his fields*?
- 168 What is the subject of *withstood*?
- 169 In what case is *Hampden* and how used?
- 170 Give an account of Milton and his writings.
- 171 Why *inglorious* Milton here?
- 172 Who was *Cromwell*?
- 173 Gray takes the Royalist view and implies that *Cromwell* was guilty of *his country's blood*. What is your opinion?
- 174 Give reasons in support of your opinion.
- 175 To what does *listening senates* refer?
- 176 Parse *to command, to despise, to scatter and to read*.
- 177 What is the object of each of these infinitives?
- 178 What is meant by *smiling land*?
- 179 Why is a comma placed at the end of this stanza?
- 180 What figure of speech extends from the XVII back to the XVI stanza?
- 181 What part of speech is *alone*? How used?
- 182 What is the meaning of *growing virtues*?
- 183 Analyze *nor circumscribe alone their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd*.
- 184 Give instances in English history of *wading through slaughter to a throne*.
- 185 What is meant by *shut the gates of mercy*?
- 186 *Gates of mercy* expresses what figure of speech?
- 187 What act of Gray's exemplifies the sentiment of this stanza?
- 188 Why should any one *hide the struggling pangs of conscious truth*?
- 189 Are rustic country people less liable to do so than others? Why?
- 190 Do they attempt to *quench the blushes of shame*?
- 191 What is the meaning of *ingenuous*?
- 192 What is a *shrine*?
- 193 What is *incense*?
- 194 Parse *kindled*.
- 195 What is a *Muse*? Name the Muses.

XIX

73 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
74 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
75 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
76 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

XX

77 Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
78 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
79 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
80 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

XXI

81 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
82 The place of fame and elegy supply;
83 And many a holy text around she strews,
84 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

XXII

85 For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
86 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
87 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
88 Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

XXIII

89 On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
90 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
91 Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
92 Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

- 196 How should *far* be parsed?
- 197 What does *far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife* modify?
- 198 What does *madding* mean?
- 199 What is meant by *ignoble strife*?
- 200 What does *sober* mean here?
- 202 Why *cool vale*?
- 203 What does *sequestered* mean?
- 204 What does *noiseless tenor* mean?
- 205 What does *yet* modify?
- 206 What is the use of *even*? What part of speech is it?
- 207 Parse *bones* and *to protect*.
- 208 What is meant by *memorials*?
- 209 Parse *erected* and *nigh*.
- 210 What is the meaning of *uncouth*?
- 211 Parse *deck'd*.
- 212 What does *shapeless* mean?
- 213 What is the subject of *implores*?
- 214 Why *spelt* and not *spelled*?
- 215 What does *unlettered* mean?
- 216 What is meant by *fame* and *elegy*?
- 217 What does *text* mean?
- 218 What is the antecedent of *she*?
- 219 Why not *to teach* instead of *that teach*?
- 220 What is the object of *teach*?
- 221 What is the meaning of *rustic moralist*?
- 222 What part of speech is *for*?
- 223 What does *dumb forgetfulness* mean?
- 224 Is *prey* an appositive or an object?
- 225 Why is *pleasing* used to modify *being*?
- 226 Why *warm*? What does *precincts* mean?
- 227 What figure of speech is expressed by *longing lingering look*?
- 228 In some editions there is a comma after *longing*. Should there be one there? Why?
- 229 What figure of speech begins with *On some fond breast*?
- 230 What does *parting* mean? *Pious*?
- 231 What do the pronouns *our* and *their* represent?
- 233 What does *ashes* mean? Why? What is *cremation*?
- 234 What does *wonted* mean? *Fires*?

XXIV

93 For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
94 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
95 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
96 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

XXV

97 Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
98 "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
99 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
100 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

XVI

101 There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
102 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
103 His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
104 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

XXVII

105 Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
106 Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
107 Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
108 Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

XXVIII

109 One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
110 Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
111 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
112 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

235 With what is *for thee* grammatically connected?
236 *Thee*. Does Gray mean himself?
237 What does *unhonour'd* mean?

- 238 What is the difference between *unhonour'd* and *dis-honoured*?
- 239 What is an *artless tale*?
- 240 Does *chance* mean *by chance* or *perchance*?
- 241 What does *led* modify?
- 242 Is *fate* the object of *inquire*?
- 243 What does *kindred spirit* mean? Give reason for comma after *fate*.
- 244 What is a *swain*?
- 245 What does *haply* mean?
- 246 What is the object of *may say*?
- 247 What does *peep of dawn* mean?
- 248 What part of speech is *brushing* and how used?
- 249 What does *to meet the sun* mean?
- 250 What is an *upland lawn*?
- 251 What is the meaning of *lawn*?
- 252 What does *nodding* mean? Did the beech nod?
- 253 What does *wreathes* mean? *Fantastic*?
- 254 Why is *listless* used with *length*?
- 255 What does *noontide* mean?
- 256 What does *pore* mean?
- 257 Make sentences containing *rattle*, *tinkle*, *clash*, *crash*, *rumble* and *murmur*.
- 258 What faulty rhyme in this stanza?
- 259 What part of speech is *hard*?
- 260 What does the phrase *smiling as in scorn* modify?
- 261 Parse *as*.
- 262 What does the phrase *muttering his wayward fancies* modify?
- 263 What do *drooping*, *woeful-wan*, *crazed*, and *crossed* modify?
- 264 What part of speech is *like*?
- 265 What does *forlorn* modify?
- 266 How should *one* be parsed?
- 267 Parse *morn*.
- 268 What does *custom'd* mean?
- 269 What part of speech is *near*?
- 270 What part of speech is *another*?
- 271 What is a *rill*?
- 272 In what sense is *wood* used? Why does this stanza end with a colon?

XXIX

- 113 The next, with dirges due in sad array,
114 Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
115 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
116 Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

XXX

THE EPITAPH.

- 117 Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
118 A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
119 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
120 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

XXXI

- 121 Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
122 Heaven did a recompense as largely send;
123 He gave to Misery all he had, a tear;
124 He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

XXXII

- 125 No farther seek his merits to disclose,
126 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
127 (There they alike in trembling hope repose)
128 The bosom of his Father and his God.

- 273 What part of speech is *next* and how used?
- 274 What is a *dirge*?
- 275 What does *due* mean?
- 276 Does *sad* logically modify *array*?
- 277 What does *slow* modify? Why not written *slowly*?
- 278 What does *churchway path* mean?
- 279 What is the object of *saw*?
- 280 Parse *borne*.
- 281 What does the parenthetical clause imply?
- 282 What is a *lay*?
- 283 *Grav'd*. Why not *graven*?
- 284 What is an *epitaph*?
- 285 What figure is *lap of earth*?
- 286 What is the subject of *rests*?
- 287 In what case is *head* and how used?
- 288 Is *unknown* a participle or an adjective?
- 289 Name all the figures of speech in this stanza.
- 290 *Large was his bounty*. What is this called?
- 291 What is the derivation of *sincere*?
- 292 How is *as* used?
- 293 Parse *large*.
- 294 Which is the appositive, *all* or *tear*?
- 295 What is the object of *wish'd*?
- 296 How should *friend* be parsed?
- 297 What is the object of *seek*? Why?
- 298 Parse *to disclose* and *draw*.
- 299 What does *dread abode* mean?
- 300 What is the antecedent of *they*?
- 301 What does *alike* modify?
- 302 Parse *bosom*?
- 303 Which of the stanzas of the *Elegy* is oftenest quoted?

NOTES AND ANSWERS.

- 1 An elegy is a poem commemorative of the dead.
- 2 An epitaph is an inscription on a tombstone in memory of the dead.
- 3 A dirge is a solemn funeral hymn.
- 4 The poem opens with a description of the churchyard and its surroundings as they appear in the shades of twilight. The graves lead the poet to meditate on the life and fate of the humble occupants. He recounts their cares, their labors, and their joys, and then calls upon the great of the earth not to despise the simple story of the poor; bidding them remember that death comes alike to all, and that their posthumous honors can as little recall them to life as these neglected graves can reanimate the poor. He continues to reflect how circumstances alone prevented them from attaining the positions and wielding the influence for which their natural abilities fitted them; how their lot prevented them from committing crimes and follies of those in higher spheres of life. But even they have not passed away unremembered, for these "frail memorials" perpetuate their memory while instructing future generations. This reminds the poet of the universal desire to be remembered after death, and, as he thinks upon it, he feels rising in his own breast the same anxious craving for immortality. His musings lead him to identify his own lot with that of the lowly sleepers, and he imagines he hears a "hoary-headed swain" narrating the story of his own life to some meditative inquirer, who is directed to read his epitaph—

"Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

- 5 The peculiar charm of the poem is owing to the fact that it expresses, in an easy, natural way, feelings and emotions that have risen in every breast. Its naturalness and simplicity win the heart and enlist the sympathies.
- 6 The Elegy is written in iambic pentameter measure, frequently called heroic verse.
- 7 In the early days of Christianity in the British Islands it was customary to bury the dead inside the church building in tombs built for the purpose. The wealthy would have the choice places near the altar. The poorer classes had to be content to lie in graves dug on the outside of the church.
- 8 The curfew was the ringing of a bell during the Norman period at eight o'clock every night, to warn people to cover up their fires and retire to bed.
- 9 The word is derived from the French *couvre-feu*, meaning cover fire.
- 10 It is said that the curfew still rings in some parts of England.
- 11 Tolls is transitive, having knell for its complement. S. S. Greene says, "The tolling of the curfew *is* the knell of departing day; therefore *knell* may be in apposition with the sentence. By many *knell* would be regarded as an object of kindred signification with the verb." We so regard it.
- 12 Knell is a cognate object.
- 13 It means *de-parting* day.
- 14 To preserve the metre. Count the syllables in each line of the stanza.
- 15 Because Gray does not refer to the herd as an aggregate, but to the animals that compose it. He sees not *it*, but *them*, on their winding way. Gray's MS. has it "*wind*."
- 16 Lea means a meadow, a field. It is an old English word found in various forms—*lay*, *ley*, *leigh*, etc. Compare the names of towns in England, *Layham*, *Horley*, *Leighton*, *Hadleigh*.

17 Sixty transpositions may be made.

- 1 The plowman homeward plods his weary way.
- 2 The plowman homeward plods weary his way.
- 3 The plowman homeward weary plods his way.
- 4 The plowman plods homeward his weary way.
- 5 The plowman plods homeward weary his way.
- 6 The plowman plods weary his homeward way.
- 7 The plowman plods weary homeward his way.
- 8 The plowman plods his weary homeward way.
- 9 The plowman plods his homeward weary way.
- 10 The plowman weary plods his homeward way.
- 11 The plowman weary plods homeward his way.
- 12 The plowman weary homeward plods his way.
- 13 The weary plowman plods his homeward way.
- 14 The weary plowman plods homeward his way.
- 15 The weary plowman homeward plods his way.
- 16 The weary homeward plowman plods his way.
- 17 The homeward plowman plods his weary way.
- 18 The homeward plowman weary plods his way.
- 19 The homeward plowman plods weary his way.
- 20 The homeward weary plowman plods his way.
- 21 Homeward the plowman plods his weary way.
- 22 Homeward the plowman plods weary his way.
- 23 Homeward the plowman weary plods his way.
- 24 Homeward the weary plowman plods his way.
- 25 Homeward weary the plowman plods his way.
- 26 Homeward weary plods the plowman his way.
- 27 Homeward plods the plowman his weary way.
- 28 Homeward plods the plowman weary his way.
- 29 Homeward plods the weary plowman his way.
- 30 Homeward plods weary the plowman his way.
- 31 Weary the plowman plods his homeward way.
- 32 Weary the plowman homeward plods his way.
- 33 Weary the plowman plods homeward his way.
- 34 Weary the homeward plowman plods his way.
- 35 Weary homeward the plowman plods his way.
- 36 Weary homeward plods the plowman his way.

- 37 Weary plods the homeward plowman his way.
- 38 Weary plods the plowman his homeward way.
- 39 Weary plods the plowman homeward his way.
- 40 Weary plods homeward the plowman his way.
- 41 Plods homeward the plowman his weary way.
- 42 Plods homeward the plowman weary his way.
- 43 Plods homeward the weary plowman his way.
- 44 Plods homeward weary the plowman his way.
- 45 Plods weary the plowman homeward his way.
- 46 Plods weary the plowman his homeward way.
- 47 Plods weary homeward the plowman his way.
- 48 Plods weary the homeward plowman his way.
- 49 Plods the homeward plowman his weary way.
- 50 Plods the homeward plowman weary his way.
- 51 Plods the homeward weary plowman his way.
- 52 Plods the weary homeward plowman his way.
- 53 Plods the weary plowman homeward his way.
- 54 Plods the weary plowman his homeward way.
- 55 Plods the plowman homeward his weary way.
- 56 Plods the plowman homeward weary his way.
- 57 Plods the plowman weary his homeward way.
- 58 Plods the plowman weary homeward his way.
- 59 Plods the plowman his homeward weary way.
- 60 Plods the plowman his weary homeward way.

Note 1. Nearly all editors of the *Elegy* have the spelling "ploughman." We have followed Gray's MS. which has it "*plowman*."

- 18 How appropriately the word *plods* expresses the slow dragging walk of the toil-worn plowman may be seen by substituting any one of its synonyms. Try *goes*, *wends*, *makes*, etc.
- 19 *Plods* is intransitive.
- 20 *Weary* logically qualifies *plowman*. Grammatically it belongs to *way*.
- 21 The plowman was weary.
- 22 Poetic license gives him the right.

modify *plods*, or, as some grammarians say, "*way* is in the objective case without a governing word."

- 24 The word *world* here means all natural things within sight of the poet.
- 25 The plowman passes from Gray's sight and therefore leaves the poet's world.
- 26 *Landscape* is the subject of the verb *fades*.
- 27 *Stillness* is the subject of *holds*.

Note 2. Difference of opinion prevails among grammarians as to the line,

"All the air a solemn stillness holds."

Some claim that *air* is the subject of *holds*; others, that *stillness* is the subject. The matter depends upon the shade of meaning given to the verb *holds* [see answer to No. 28]. We reason thus: *air* is a concrete noun and *stillness* is abstract. The abstract is in or pervades the concrete. Stillness is in or pervades the air.

- 28 *Holds* means *pervades*, *permeates*.
- 29 S. S. Greene says: "*Save* is a preposition, showing the relation between *where the . . . distant folds* and *all*; that is, *all* the air *except* or *save*, the part excepted, is still."—Greene's Analysis, page 291.
- 30 *Save* seems originally to have been used as a passive participle, like *except*, *provided*, etc., with a noun nominative absolute. *Save* is now generally considered a preposition used in the sense of *except* and is followed by an object. Angus says, "*Save* was originally an imperative."
- 31 The object of *save* is the clause beginning with *where* and ending with the stanza.
- 32 The verb *wheels* may be considered transitive, having *flight* for its object. Another view is to make *wheels* intransitive equivalent in meaning to turning or flying round and round in an aimless flight, as beetles do.

- 33 The beetle here alluded to is the May-bug, door-beetle, or cock-chaffer that flies about on summer evenings making a droning sound. The grub of this insect remains in the ground three years before coming to its perfect state, and is so voracious that it does great injury to the roots of grass and trees.
- 34 Lord Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* says: "This figure is not dignified with a proper name, because it has been overlooked by writers."
Swinton calls such figures "*Transferred Epithets*," a very good name for them.
It is the beetle that drones, but the epithet *droning* is transferred to *flight*. The people or the sheep hearing the tinkling of the bell become *drowsy*, but the epithet is transferred to *tinklings*.
- Note 3. The word *weary* in the third line of the poem is another example of transferred epithet.
- 35 *Folds* is used by metonymy for *flocks*.
- 36 The clause following is the object of *save*. The construction is similar to that in line 7.
- 37 *That* in such constructions was originally a demonstrative pronoun, meaning *that fact* or *circumstance*, the clause following being in apposition.
That may now be regarded as a mere introductory word. It might be called the *sentence article*.
- 38 *Yonder* is a definitive adjective.
- 39 *Ivy-mantled* means covered with ivy as with a mantle or cloak.
- 40 *Tower* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *tor*, *torr*, *tur* a rock, a peak, a *tower*.
Compare Dutch *toren*, German *thurm*, Gaelic *tor*, *tur*, and Latin *turris*.
- 41 Because the word appropriately describes the nature of the owl. The owl is a moping, melancholy bird.
- 42 The poet makes the melancholy hooting of the owl appear as addressed to the moon.
Compare Shakespeare's "I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon, than such a Roman."

- 43 *Such* is a pronominal adjective used as a noun.
As does duty for a relative pronoun.
Wandering is a participle.
Near is an adverb.
 Some grammarians call *near* a preposition. In our opinion *near* is never a preposition. Study the following sentence: The steamer passed *near* the shore, the yawl passed *nearer* the shore, and the skiff passed *nearest* the shore.
- 44 Because the owl is personified as a feminine noun.
- 45 *Bower* is from the Anglo-Saxon *bur*, a cottage, a chamber, hence a shelter. Compare German *bauer*.
- 46 *Bower* is in the objective case, subsequent or object of a preposition *to* or *unto* understood. In Anglo-Saxon it is in the dative case, dative denoting nearness.
- 47 The owl unmolested had made her home in the ivy-mantled tower for a long time, hence the poet makes her reign *ancient*.
- 48 Because the adjective *ancient* modifies the thought expressed by *solitary reign*. It does not mean ancient and solitary.
- 49 *Beneath* has two subsequent terms of relation, *elms* and *shade*. It makes but little difference whether the antecedent term of relation be considered the participle *laid*, or the verb *sleep*. Both these words might be considered antecedent terms of relation.
- 51 *Shade* has a wider meaning than *shadow*.
- 52 *Rugged* is akin to rough.
- 53 It is an adverbial clause modifying the phrase, *beneath*
 *elms* and *shade*.
- 54 *Heaves* is intransitive.
- 55 *Turf* is its subject. The turf rises in mounds above the graves.

56 *Many a* is a construction more than ordinarily difficult of explanation. Archbishop French, in the first edition of his *English, Past and Present*, explained "many a man" as a corruption of "many of men." In the later editions he has quietly withdrawn this statement. Many grammarians followed French without due examination. In early English it was a frequent practice to emphasize the adjective by a change of position, as *long a time*, for *a long time*. This is shown by our retention of such expressions as *such a woman*, *what a day*. Abbott in his *How to Parse*, par. 218, says the regular construction for *many a man* has tried would be *many men have tried*; but this seems to have been confused with "many times a man has tried". Hence Abbott parses *many* as an adverb modifying *a* or as a part of the compound adjective *many a*=*many one*. Other writers regard *many* as an adjective, and the construction as inverted.

Note 4. Such expressions as *many a*, *such a*, *what a*, *but a*, *not a*, etc., should be parsed together as single adjectives.

- 57 Yes. Because their meaning will permit no other rational disposition.
- 58 *Each* is a pronominal adjective used as a noun in the nominative case in apposition to *forefathers*.
- 59 *Narrow cell* means the grave.
- 60 *Rude* is from the Latin *rudis*, and means rough, uncultivated, not polished in manners.
- 61 *Ham* is an old English word, meaning an abode or home. The word still exists in such names as *Oakham*, *Buckingham*, etc.; *let* is a diminutive suffix, meaning *little*, as in *streamlet*, etc. Hence, *hamlet* means a little home.
- 62 The morning air is filled with incense, giving health to those who breathe it.
- 63 *Twittering* is a participle modifying swallow. *Straw-built* refers to the thatched roofs then common in England.
- 64 A *clarion* is a kind of trumpet.
- 65 *Clarion* is used by metonymy for the crowing of the cock.

- 66 *Echoing horn* alludes to the horn of the huntsman. The chase usually began early in the morning.
- 67 They should be parsed together. Because *no more* means *never*.
- 68 *Shall rouse* has four subjects, *call*, *swallow*, *clarion* and *horn*.
- 69 Because they were roused from sleep not by their will, but by other agents.
- 70 *Forefathers*.
- 71 Because the meaning is *humble* bed. The word refers rather to the *quality* of the bed than to its *height* or *position*.
- 72 No. Although some writers have taken *lowly* bed to mean the grave.
- Gray meant literally *bed*, not *grave*.
- 73 The four subjects of *shall rouse* with their modifiers constitute the figure, accumulation, lines 17, 18 and 19.
- 74 There is nothing *harsh* about the call of incense-breathing morn, the twittering swallow, the cock's clarion or the hunter's horn.
- 75 *Hearth* is the subject of *shall burn*.
- 76 The fire burns on or behind the hearth.
- 77 The answer to No. 69 applies here.
- 78 Yes. *Care* is used for task to rhyme with share. *Care* might be considered object of preposition, *at* understood.
- 79 *Ply* means to work steadily, to be busy.
- 80 *Care* here means the housewife's evening work or tasks.
- 81 *To lisp* is an infinitive used adverbially to modify *run*. It denotes purpose.
- Return* is a noun complement of *to lisp*.
- 82 Yes. Or it might be considered the subsequent of the preposition, *upon* understood.
- 83 Kiss.
- 84 *To share* modifies climb by denoting purpose.
- 85 *Sickle* is from the Anglo-Saxon *sicel*, *sicol*, to cut, a sicle. A reaping hook having a *circular* form.
- 86 *Forefathers*.

- 87 *Furrow* is the subject of *has broke*.
88 For the sake of meter and rhyme.
A case of poetic license.
89 No. It violates the sequence of tense.
Notice the other verbs in this stanza.
90 *Stubborn* means like a stub, i. e., stiff, unbending, obstinate.
91 *Furrow* is used by metonymy for *plow*.
92 *Glebe* means *turf, soil or land*.
93 By poetic license. *Jocund* is an adjective form used for an adverb form, a practice common in poetry.
94 *Jocund* modifies *did drive*.
95 *Afield* is a noun used adverbially to modify *did drive*.
96 A has the force of a preposition, and is contracted by rapidity of pronunciation.
97 *Woods* is the subject of *bow'd*.
98 *Sturdy* means *hardy, strong*.
99 By metonymy, a favorite figure with Gray.
100 *Mock* is an infinitive, the basis of the phrase used as the object of the verb *let*, having ambition for its accusative subject.
101 *Joys* and *destiny* are nouns, object of the infinitive *mock*.
Observe is an adjective modifying *destiny*.
102 *Homely* means *plain, having the plainness of home*.
103 By metonymy.
104 *Annals*, records classified by years.
105 *Plural*... Modern usage would hardly allow this word to be considered singular.
106 *Heraldry* is the science of armorial bearings.
107 A pronominal adjective, or an adjective pronoun.
108 *Hour* is the subject of *awaits*.

Note 5. Gray in his MS. wrote it "*awaits*." Many writers, mistaking the meaning, changed *awaits* to *await*, claiming that *await* cannot be justified on grammatical grounds. Careful thought will lead any one to see that the meaning is, that the inevitable hour, i. e., the hour of death, *awaits* the boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all that beauty or wealth ever gave. The hour of death will terminate all such vanities.

- 109 and 110. These two queries are answered in Note 5.
 111 *Alike* is an adverb and modifies the verb *awaits*.
 112 *Inevitable hour* means the hour of death.
 113 (1) Wolfe's death. (2) Lord Nelson's death.
 114 *But* is an adverb and modifies the phrase *to the grave*.
 115 *Ye* has here a demonstrative force.
You is personal.
 116 *Ye* is a demonstrative pronoun or adjective and *points out* proud.
Proud is a noun in apposition to *yon*.
 117 *These* is a pronominal adjective.
 118 *These* represents those buried in the churchyard.
 119 By a combination of personification and metonymy. Memory=remembering ones.
 120 This clause is adverbial, modifying *raise*.
 121 *Long-drawn* pictures the long narrow aisle of a cathedral or large church.
 122 *Aisle* is from the Latin *ala*, a wing.
 123 *Fret* is a kind of angular ornament, formed by small fillets interlacing each other at right angles. Hence, a fretted vault is one ornamented with frets.
 124 An *anthem* is church music adapted to passages from the Scripture.
 125 *Pealing* is a participial adjective modifying *anthem*.
 126 The ancient Greeks and Romans used to burn their dead and place their ashes in urns made for the purpose. These urns were frequently ornamented outside with pictures illustrating the story or history of the deceased person. Such an urn the poet calls a storied urn. Windows of churches are often similarly painted with quotations from Scripture.

- 127 *Animated* means looking lifelike.
- 128 *Mansion* is here used for the human body.
- 129 *Honour's voice* means the praise given one for commendable actions.
- 130 Because *provoke* is here used in its simple primary signification, *to call forth*.
- 131 *Provoke* comes from the Latin *provocare*, to call forth.
- 132 In this stanza there are three examples of rhetorical interrogation. Lines 41 and 42 constitute the first; line 43, the second; line 44, the third.
Honour's, *Flattery*, and *Death*, are examples of personification.
- 133 *Neglected* is used in the sense of *uncared for*, *unnoticed*.
- 134 *Pregnant* is an adjective modifying *heart*.
- 135 *Heart* is the subject of *is laid*.
- 136 *Celestial fire* means the gift of poetry.
- 137 *Hands* is a noun subject of the verb, *are laid* understood.
- 138 *Rod of Empire* means the sceptre as the emblem of sovereignty.
- 139 *Living lyre* probably means one which gives forth peculiarly sweet sounds under the hands of a skilful performer.
- 140 *Her* represents knowledge.
- 141 Knowledge is personified as a feminine noun, hence *her* is feminine.
- 142 Page is in the objective case complement of *did unroll*.
- 143 The page of knowledge is *ample*.
Knowledge covers a wide range of subjects.
- 144 *Rich* modifies *page*.
- 145 By *the spoils of Time* are meant the various kinds of knowledge that time and study have enabled men to win from Ignorance.
- 146 Coldness is an attribute of *Penury*; hence, *chill Penury*.
- 147 Before printing was invented books were written upon parchment, the sheets of which were rolled together and not bound as the leaves of a modern book. These ancient books had to be opened in the same way as we open a map, by *unrolling it*.

- 148 *Noble rage* means enthusiasm, inspiration; that is, the enthusiasm by which they might have been carried to eminence in one or other of the lofty positions indicated in the previous stanza.
- 149 *Genial* comes from *gigno*,—*inborn* or *natural*.
- 150 *Current* means the flowing of their *longings* or desires.
- 151 *Full* modifies *many a*.
- 152 No. Because the meaning forbids it.
- 153 A *gem* is a precious stone.
- 154 *Purest ray* means perfect in color.
- 155 *Serene* modifies *ray*.
- 156 *Serene* means *clear*.
- 157 An *unfathomed cave* is one so deep that it has never been measured.
A fathom is six feet. It is used in measuring the depth of the sea.
- 158 *Bear* here means *contain, have, hold*.
- 159 *To blush* is an infinitive modifying *is born*.
- 160 *Unseen* is an adjective. Because there is no verb *unsee* from which to derive a participle.
- 161 *Blush* is more poetical than *blossom*.
- 162 *Waste* is an infinitive modifying *is born*.
- 163 Because the term well represents the deep poverty and the unappreciative surroundings which often obscure the "lamp of genius."
- 164 Some *village Hampden* is an instance of the figure *antonomasia* a form of *synecdoche* which consists in using a proper name to designate a class.
- 165 Because the poet makes Hampden represent a class of common villagers.
- 166 John Hampden was a cousin of Oliver Cromwell. He entered Parliament in 1621, was imprisoned in 1627 for refusing to pay his portion of an illegal loan which the king was attempting to raise, but was shortly afterward liberated and became an active member of Parliament. In 1634, to raise money, Charles I. had recourse to the impost of "ship-money," at first limiting the tax to London and other maritime towns; but, attempting in 1636 to levy from inland places, Hampden resisted, was tried

- and fined. He was afterward a member of both the Short and the Long Parliaments, and was one of the "Five" whom Charles tried to seize. On the breaking out of the civil war, he entered the Parliamentary army, and was fatally wounded at the battle of Chalgrove Field.
- 167 The wealthy landed proprietor who sought to oppress his tenantry, as Charles I. attempted to violate the liberties of the English people.
- 168 The relative *that* is the subject of *withstood*.
- 169 *Hampden* is in the nominative case, one of the subjects of *may rest*.
- 170 John Milton, the great English Epic poet, was born in 1608 and died in 1674.
An enumeration of his writings may be made by the student.
- 171 Because any of those buried in the churchyard of the Milton type were unknown to fame.
- 172 Oliver Cromwell was a country gentleman who became member of Parliament for Huntingdon, and afterwards the leader of the Parliamentarian forces against those of Charles I., on the execution of whom he was made Lord-Protector of the Commonwealth of England. He died in 1658.
- 173 That the murder of Charles I. was illegal and unjustified no one will doubt; but as to the culpability of Cromwell there will always be a difference of opinion.
- 174 History teaches that the pendulum of civil government is ever swinging between *monarchy* and *anarchy*.
- 175 *Listening senates* refers to the Houses of Parliament listening to some famous orator.
- 176 These four infinitives, with their complements, are the immediate objects of *forbade* in line 65. By supplying the remote object *them*, the construction will be evident. These infinitives, with their complements, are intended by the poet to represent "their growing virtues." Their lot not only circumscribed their virtues, but also confined their crimes, namely, *to wade, etc., to shut, etc., to hide, etc., to quench, etc., to heap, etc.* These infinitives are the objects of *forbade* in line 67.

- 177 *Applause* is the object of *to command*.
Threats is the object of *to despise*.
Plenty is the object of *to scatter*.
History is the object of *to read*.
- 178 *Smiling land* may mean *productive* as applied to the land itself, or, by the figure, metonymy, may signify *prosperous* or *grateful* in reference to the people.
- 179 Because the thought is not completed and is carried over into the next stanza.
- 180 *Anastrophe*.
- 181 *Alone*, an adjective connected grammatically with *virtues*.
- 182 *Growing virtues* means the powers of mind that would have developed themselves if opportunity had been afforded.
- 183 Their lot not only circumscribed their growing virtues, but also confined their crimes.
Now it is easy to analyze.
- 184 (1) William the Conqueror at the battle of Hastings.
(2) Henry IV., by the murder of Richard II.
(3) Richard III., by the murder of his nephews, Edward V. and Richard Duke of York.
- 185 To shut the gates of mercy is to allow no mercy to be shown, to act in a cruel and unmerciful manner.
- 186 Metonymy.
- 187 It will be remembered that Gray refused the "Laurel."
- 188 In their low estate there was no temptation for them to conceal their real sentiments, as is too frequently the case with those who are acquiring or have acquired position and influence. In covering up one's real opinions, "conscious truth," for the sake of place or power, there must be more or less of a "struggle" and "pang" in the mind.
- 189 Perhaps. They have less ambition for position.
- 190 These rude ones were unpracticed in hiding the guilt of the heart under a fair exterior.
- 191 *Ingenuous* means *open, frank, free from reserve*.
- 192 A *shrine* is a case in which something sacred is deposited.

- 193 *Incense* is perfume exhaled by fire.
Here it means poetic adulation or flattery.
- 194 *Kindled* is a participle modifying incense.
- 195 The Muses were, according to the earliest writers, the inspiring goddesses of song, and, according to later notions, divinities presiding over the different kinds of poetry, and over the arts and sciences.
The names of the Muses were:

Clio, the Muse of history:

Euterpe, the Muse of lyric poetry:

Thalia, the Muse of comedy:

Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy:

Terpsichore, the Muse of the dance:

Polyhymnia, the Muse of sublime hymn:

Urania, the Muse of astronomy:

Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry:

Erato, the Muse of erotic poetry, geometry, and the mimic art.

Note 6 After the 18th stanza Gray's first MS. had the following four stanzas, now omitted:

The thoughtless world to majesty may bow,
Exalt the brave, and idolize success;
But more to innocence their safety owe
Than Pow'r, or Genius, e'er conspir'd to bless.

And thou who, mindful of the unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these notes their artless tale relate,
By night and lonely contemplation led
To wander in the gloomy walks of fate.

Hark! how the sacred calm, that breathes around,
Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease;
In still small accents whisp'ring from the ground
A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

No more, with reason and thyself at strife,
Give anxious cares and wishes room;
But through the cool sequester'd vale of life
Pursue the silent tenor of thy doom.

Gray first intended that the Elegy should end here. The second of these stanzas has been remodelled and used as the 24th of the present version.

196 *Far* is an adverb modifying the phrase from *strife*.

197 It modifies *kept*.

Note 7. To give the poet's meaning, line 73 must be considered as an adverbial adjunct to *kept*. If it be taken with the second line of the stanza, as by *punctuation* and *position* it should be, it would give a sense exactly contrary to that intended. They attended to their own little matters, unaffected by the eager scrambling for wealth or position that must necessarily exist in every town or city.

198 *Madding* means *excited* and *exciting*.

199 *Ignoble strife* means the strife of trade, or commercialism. Gray despised a commercial life.

200 *To stray* is an infinitive used as the object of *learn'd*.

201 *Sober* means *calm*, *moderate*.

202 *Cool* expresses an attribute of a quiet or retired vale.

203 *Sequestered* means *retired*.

204 *Noiseless tenor* means their quiet course.

205 *Yet* is an adverb modifying *implores*.

206 *Even* emphasizes *these bones*. Adverb.

207 *Bones* is a noun object of *to protect*.

To protect is an infinitive adverbial to *erected*.

208 *Memorial* probably means the wooden head boards on which the name, etc., of the deceased was painted, said to be *frail* because not so strong or lasting as gravestones.

209 *Erected* is a participle modifying *memorial*.

Nigh is an adverb modifying *erected*.

210 The literal meaning of *uncouth* is *unknown*. Render it here *unpolished*.

211 *Deck'd* is a participle modifying *memorial*.

212 Byron asks, "In Gray's *Elegy* is there an image more striking than his 'shapeless sculpture'?"

Shapeless means, not as being without shape, but as having little resemblance to the object intended to be represented.

213 *Memorial* is the subject of *implores*.

214 *Spelt* renders the line more euphonious than spelled.

215 *Unlettered* means *unlearned*.

- 216 *Fame* and *elegy* have reference to memorials to the dead.
- 217 *Text* refers to a common practice of inscribing passages of Scripture on tombstones.
- 218 *Muse*.
- 219 *That teach* is evidently ungrammatical.
To teach is much better. Gray sacrificed the grammar for euphony.
- 220 *To die* is the immediate, *moralist* the remote or dative, object of *teach*.
- 221 *Rustic moralist* may mean either the peasant who practices morality, or the one who simply philosophizes thereupon.
- 222 *For* is an introductory particle.
- 223 The poet means that no one in ordinary circumstances has ever died in such a state of forgetfulness as not to look back with longing upon the days that are past.
- 224 *Prey* is in apposition with *being*.
 Note 8. Hales remarks. "At the first glance it might seem that *to dumb Forgetfulness a prey* was [is] in apposition to *who*, and the meaning was [is] 'Who that now lies forgotten,' etc.; in which case the second line of the stanza must be closely connected with the fourth; for the question of the passage is not 'Who ever died?' but 'Who ever died without wishing to be remembered?' But in this way of interpreting this difficult stanza (i) there is comparatively little force in the appositional phrase, and (ii) there is a certain awkwardness in deferring so long the clause (virtually adverbial though apparently coordinate) in which, as has just been noticed, the point of the question really lies. Perhaps therefore it is better to take the phrase *to dumb Forgetfulness a prey* as in fact the completion of the predicate *resign'd*, and interpret thus: Who ever resigned this life of his with all its pleasures and all its pains to be utterly ignored and forgotten?—who ever,

when resigning it, reconciled himself to its being forgotten? In this case the second half of the stanza echoes the thought of the first half." We do not concur in this, but prefer to take to *dumb Forgetfulness a prey* as appositional, and not as the grammatical complement of *resigned*.

Our rendition may be made plain by collating the words of the first two lines of the stanza thus:

For, who this pleasing anxious being, a prey to dumb forgetfulness, ever resigned?

- 225 *Pleasing* is used in the sense of acceptable.
 226 *Warm* expresses the condition of the cheerful day.
Precincts means limits or confines.
 227 Alliteration.
 228 No. Because the sense does not require the use of a comma between these words.
 The thought is *one longing lingering look*.
 229 This is an example of *climax*.
 We have death, after death, after burial, and even after that.
 230 *Parting* means departing, as it does in line 1.
Pious means affectionate.
 231 *Even* is an adverb modifying the phrase, *from the tomb*.
 232 *Our* is the first person plural, and *their* represents ashes.
 233 *Ashes* means *bodily remains*.
Cremation is consuming the dead body by fire.
 234 *Wonted* means accustomed.
Fires means the higher desires and aspirations of men.
 235 *For thee* is grammatically connected with *may say* in line 97. In this construction, *Haply* * * * *say* is the principal sentence;
If * * * *fate* is a subordinate adverbial clause to it.
 236 Yes.
 237 *Unhonour'd* means not honored, i. e., having no honor

bestowed upon them.

238 *Dishonoured* is a much stronger word than *unhonoured*.
Unhonoured means receiving no honor.

Dishonoured means disgraced.

239 An *artless tale* is a simple story.

240 *Chance* means perchance.

241 *Led* modifies *spirit*.

242 We prefer to consider *inquire* intransitive, and supply a preposition *about* or *concerning* to govern *fate*. Many would call *fate* the object of *inquire*.

243 *Kindred* means of like kind or nature.

The comma is placed after *fate* because line 93 to line 97, inclusive, are grammatically connected.

244 A *swain* is a man dwelling in the country, a rustic.

245 *Haply* means perhaps.

246 The object of *say* is all within quotation marks from line 98 to line 116, inclusive.

247 *Peep of dawn* means sunrise.

248 *Brushing* is a participle modifying *him*.

249 It means to see the sun rise.

250 *Upland lawn* is a lawn sloping upward.

251 *Lawn* formerly meant *meadow*. Its meaning is now narrowed to a plot of grass near a house.

252 *Nodding* means waving in the breeze.

If the beech waved in the breeze, it nodded.

253 *Wreathes* means to twist.

Fantastic alludes to the peculiar forms into which the roots of trees, especially of the beech, are often twisted.

254 Because *listless* expresses most forcibly the thought intended. *Listless* means inattentive, idle. The poet speaks of himself as lying at full length upon the grass at the foot of a shady beech with nothing else to do but to pore upon the brook that babbles by.

255 *Noontide* means time of noon.

256 Pore means to gaze steadily.

257 *Babble* is an onomatopoeic or sound word.

A babbling brook is one that flows over its pebbly bed with a babbling sound.

- 258 The *rattle* of a snake, the *tinkle* of a sheep bell, the *clash* of arms, the *crash* of a falling tree, the rumble of a train, and the murmur of a stream all are examples of *onomatopoe*.
Beech and *stretch* do not rhyme in sound. They are *eye* rhymes rather than *ear* rhymes.
- 259 *Hard* is an adverb modifying the phrase *by yon wood*.
- 260 *Smiling as in scorn* is a participial phrase modifying *he*.
 261 Supply words as follows: *as (he would smile) (if he were smiling)* in scorn, and the parsing of *as* is easy.
- 262 *Muttering his wayward fancies* is a participial phrase modifying *he*.
 Some parse this phrase as adverbial to *would rove*.
 We believe that the participle should always be considered adjectival.
- 263 Drooping and woeful-wan are adjective adjuncts of *he* (understood), to be supplied as the subject of *would rove* (understood). *Crazed* and *crossed* modify *one*.
- 264 *Like* is an adjective modifying *he*.
- 265 *Forlorn* modifies *one*.
- 266 *One* is an indefinite pronoun in the objective case after *to* understood.
- 267 *Morn* is noun objective, used adverbially to modify *missed*.
- 268 *Custom'd* means accustomed.
 This word is now obsolete in sense.
- 269 *Near* is an adverb.
- 270 *Another* is a pronominal adjective used as a noun.
- 271 A *rill* is a little stream of water.
- 272 *Wood* is used for *woods, trees*.
 Because of the grammatical sequence of the words.
- 273 *Next* is used instead of *morn* (*morn* came).
- 274 *Dirge* is from *dirige*, a solemn service in the Catholic Church, being a hymn beginning *dirige gressus meos*.
 Hence a *dirge* is a hymn.
- 275 *Due* means *to owe*, from the Latin *debere*.
- 276 No. But grammatically it does.

- 277 *Slow* modifies *borne*.
Because the metre requires *slow*.
- 278 *Church-way path* means church-yard path, i. e., the path between the graves.
- 279 *Him* is the direct object and *borne* is the supplemental object of *saw*.
- 280 *Borne* is an infinitive used as the supplemental object of *saw*.
- 281 This parenthetical clause implies that the "*hoary-headed swain*" could not read.
- 282 A *lay* is a funeral lamentation.
The exigencies of rhyme compelled Gray to use this word in place of *epitaph*.
- 283 Because the metre requires one syllable.
Note.9. Before the epitaph, Gray's MS. contains the following omitted stanza:
 "There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
 By hands unseen are frequent violets found;
 The robin loves to build and warble there,
 And little footsteps lightly print the ground."
 This stanza was printed in some of the early editions, but afterwards omitted because Gray thought that it was too long a parenthesis in this place.
 The stanza is most beautiful and deserves preservation.
- 284 An *epitaph* is an inscription on a monument, in honor of or in memory of the dead.
- 285 *Lap of earth* is a metaphor. By this beautiful figure he is made to rest in his grave (the lap of earth) like a tired child in the lap of its mother.
- 286 *Youth* is the subject of *rests*.
- 287 *Head* is in the *objective case* after the preposition *with* understood, or it might be taken in the *nominative case absolute* with the participle *being* understood. We prefer the first interpretation of the meaning.
- 288 *Unknown* is an adjective.

- 289 *Lap of earth* is a metaphor.
Fortune, Fame, Science, and Melancholy are personifications.
Frown'd not=smiled is an example of litotes.
290 *Large was his bounty* is an instance of hyperbation.
291 *Sincere* is from Latin *sine*, without, and *cera*, wax, meaning honey free from wax.
292 *As* is here used absolutely, not correlatively.
293 *Large* is a predicate adjective.
294 *All* is the appositive and explains *tear*.

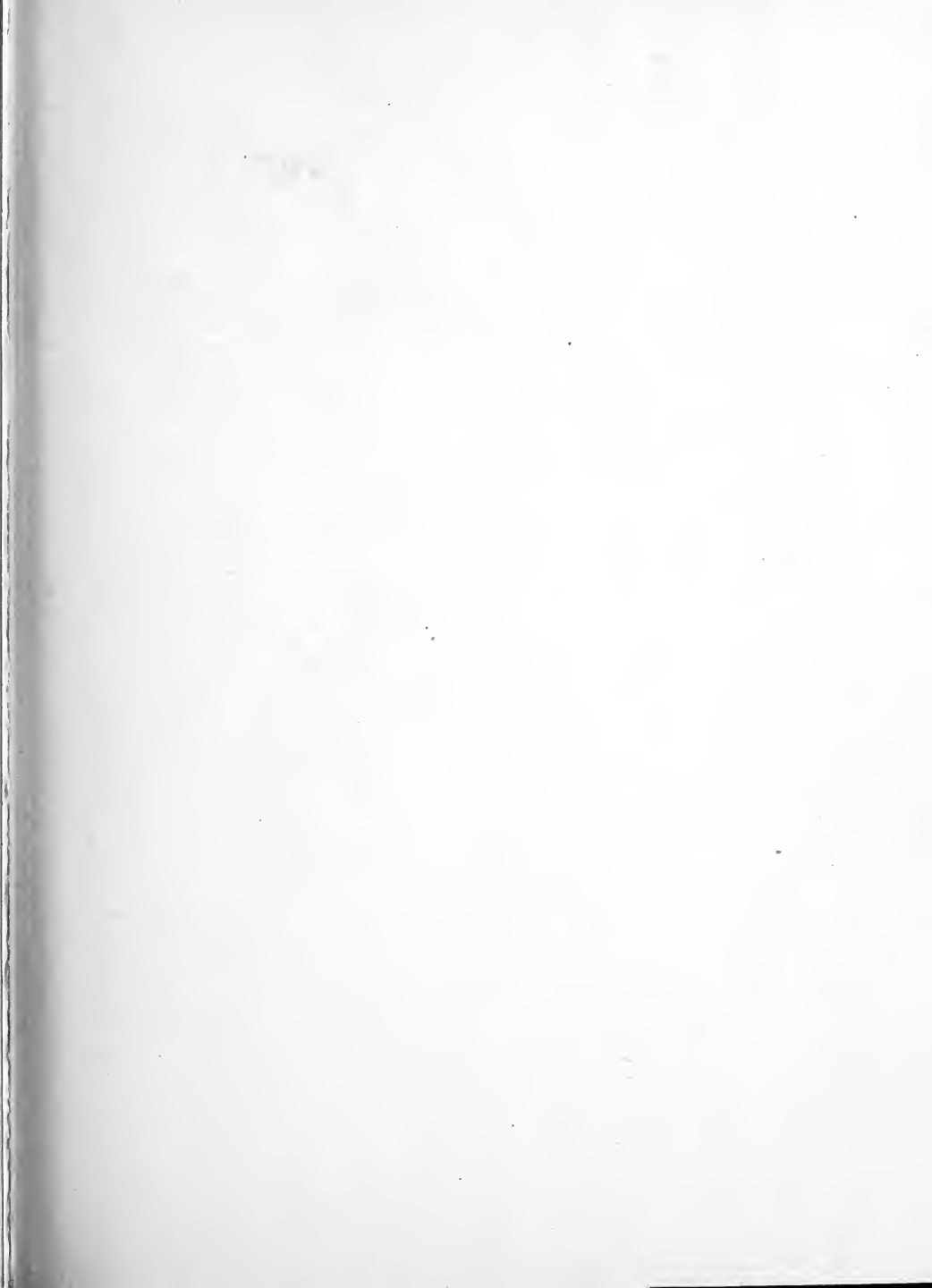
Note 10. In some editions *all he had* is inclosed in a parenthesis. Gray's MS. gives it as in this text.

- 295 *That* understood is the object of wished.
296 *Friend* is the object of gained.

Note 11. The third and fourth lines of this stanza respectively explain the first and second.

- 297 The object of *seek* includes *his * * * abode*.
298 *To disclose* and *to draw* are infinitives used as the basis of the complement of the verb *seek*.
299 *Dread abode* is amplified and explained by the last line.
300 *Merits* and *frailties* are the antecedents of they.
301 *Alike* is an adverb modifying *repose*.
302 *Bosom* is the subsequent of the preposition *on* understood.
303 I think the XIV. stanza is the most frequently quoted.





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